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New London County Historical Society

11 Blinman Street SHAW MANSION New London, Conn.

Quarterly Bulletin

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LEAGUE MEETING AT NORWICH ON MAY 28

The annual meeting of the Connecticut League of Historical Societies, to be held in Norwich on Saturday, May 28, offers each member of our society a day full of events of historic and antiquarian interest. This meeting will be held in conjunction with the Spring meeting of the Antiquarian and Landmarks Society. Our host will be the reanimated Society of the Founders of Norwich.

The center of interest will be the formal opening of the Leffingwell Inn (circa 1675), which has been moved to safety from its former location on the new Connecticut Turnpike and completely restored by the Norwich Society.

This notable building, located exactly at the end of Exit 81 East from the Turnpike, was opened as an inn in 1701 by Thomas Leffingwell. It was handed down to succeeding generations as a family inheritance. Christopher, perhaps the best known of the Leffingwells, was an important man during Revolutionary days. Besides keeping tavern, he helped to introduce papermaking to Connecticut. He also operated a stocking factory, a pottery, a chocolate mill, a fulling mill and dye house. He was a captain, later colonel of light infantry, and in 1784 was appointed by Washington as the first naval officer under the new government.

Dr. Richard D. Birdsall, assistant professor of history at Connecticut College, will address the morning meeting at Slater Hall, Norwich Free Academy, at 11 o'clock. He will speak on "The Leffingwell Inn, past and present."

Registration for the meeting will be from 10 to 10:30 at Slater Hall. The morning program will be free, but there will be a charge for coffee and dessert for any who do not wish to carry their own, and the tour of old houses (except the Leffingwell Inn) will be open only to current members of the Antiquarian and Landmarks Society or those who join the society in Norwich on May 28.

The following houses will be open to those members of the Antiquarian Society making the tour:

Jonathan Avery House, circa 1752. At 46 Huntington Avenue.

Joseph Carpenter Silversmith Shop. 71 East Town Street.

Mrs. Ozias Dodge. 8 Mediterranean Lane. Charming gardens.

Raymond B. Case. 12 Mediterranean Lane. Sea-captain's hideaway.

Mr. and Mrs. Laurence R. Browning. 14 Mediterranean Lane.

Col. Joshua Huntington House, circa 1691. At 11 Huntington Lane.

General Jabez Huntington House, circa 1691. At 16 Huntington Lane.

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Robbins. 10 Ox Hill Road.

Walter E. Gilbert. 23 Ox Hill Road. To see large collection of clocks.

SOCIETY RECEIVES CAULKINS ITEMS FROM NORWICH DESCENDANT

A number of personal objects belonging to Miss Frances M. Caulkins and members of the Caulkins and Haven families have been given to the Society by Mrs. H. H. Pettis of Norwich, whose late husband was a Haven descendant.

All of these items possess a sentimental value, and contribute much to a proper setting for the author of the notable History of New London. Perhaps the most treasured, because the most personal, are six silver teaspoons marked with the initials FMC. There is also a bronze leather sewing kit which may have belonged to the busy author if she had time for domestic duties.

Linen sleeve protectors, samplers with the stitched names of Elizabeth Haven and F. Haven, hymnals, psalm books and publications of the American Tract Society bearing the inscriptions of Pamela Caulkins and Fanny M. Haven, a wall plaque with a butterfly and pressed ferns, an unsigned framed drawing of New York harbor, scrapbooks showing the author's exquisite care in preparation--all these objects were part of the life of the Caulkins-Haven family.

A handsome cane with carved ivory head, inscribed H. P. Haven, New London, February 11th, 1868, completes the collection.

Our heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Pettis for these objects that are properly given to an historical society as part of the background for a truly cultivated time.

ESSEX TO OPEN HOMES IN JUNE

The Essex Woman's Club announces a festival and tour of homes on Wednesday, June 8. A number of late 18th and early 19th century homes built and owned by shipbuilders and sea captains will be opened to visitors at an admission fee of $2.00 for the tour. In addition, the Lt. William Pratt Museum, 1678, restored by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, will be open.

Marine-minded visitors may visit luxurious yachts in Essex Harbor, a far cry from the schooners in the West India trade. In the old days the pungent smell of tar and the sharp odor of rum, the sound of chanteys and the creak of ships' gear created an atmosphere that still clings to this historic spot.

Luncheon from 11:30 to 2:00, and a shad bake from 6:00 to 8:00, served under a tent, will be added attractions.

NEW MEMORIAL TO CAPTAIN MOSES ROGERS

A new library-museum is being planned as a memorial to Captain Moses Rogers, the New Londoner who commanded the steamship Savannah which in 1819 became the first power-driven ship to cross the Atlantic. This memorial is being promoted by the South Carolina Economic Association, and will be built in Cheraw, S.C., where Captain Rogers made his home after his historic voyage and was buried in 1821 after succumbing to yellow fever.

National Maritime Day, May 22nd, was named by Congress in his honor. The world's first atomic-powered merchant ship, launched last year at Camden, N.J., is named after his Savannah.

An interesting contribution to the Rogers-Savannah literature was made recently by the pupils of the Waterford High School in the February issue of their monthly news magazine, The Charter. Articles on Moses and his relative, Captain Stevens Rogers, a Waterford native who was sailing master of the Savannah on its historic voyage, and the new nuclear powered Savannah, contribute valuable details to the fascinating story of men and ships and the sea.

The Charter's article on the early Savannah reminds us that this experimental vessel was elegantly fitted and luxuriously furnished, with three salons containing imported carpets, curtains and hangings. The staterooms were large and commodious, including 32 berths.

GIFT OF WAR POSTERS

A large collection of World War I posters has been given to the Society by Mr. and Mrs. Richard R. Morgan.

An examination of these eloquent examples of poster art reminds the viewer of their tremendous emotional appeal. Some of the best work came straight from the trenches,

originated and produced by members of the American Expeditionary Forces. Such artists as Howard Chandler Christy, Joseph Pennell, Haskell Coffin, Edwin H. Blashfield, Gerrit G. Beyeker, and the New York Herald Tribune's "Ding" contributed magnificently to the Liberty Bond and War Savings Stamp drives.

Messages from President Woodrow Wilson, appeals by glamorous moving picture stars, grim messages of appeal striking across a sheet like lightning flashes--these posters are a summation of the mastery of the art of persuasion. They swayed millions to the cause.

Such a collection deserves careful preservation. We are grateful to the donors for their generosity and their careful guardianship of these reminders of a time when America listened and replied to voices across the world.

DIGEST OF NOTES ON MEETING ON THE OLD TOWN MILL

A meeting of the Advisory Board of the Society with members of the City Council for consideration of the restoration and preservation of the Old Mill was held at the Shaw Mansion on February 2nd. Invited guests were Admiral James E. Maher and Mr. Harry F. Morse.

Inquiry was made of City Council members as to the foundation for the rumor that Sturbridge Village is interested in the Mill. Council members reported that this rumor is utterly without foundation.

Following expressions of concern and interest in the project, a 12-point program was outlined by Mr. Morse.

1. The building of a high protective wire fence around the property.
2. The interior of the Mill must be made safe, including the repair and strengthening of the floors.
3. The side walls and ceilings should be repaired.
4. The Mill wheel should be put in order and made to turn.
5. Mill stones should be placed in operation.
6. Cleaning of the grounds is necessary, with the possible provision of rustic tables.
7. Building of a rustic bridge.
8. Water should be supplied to the Mill.
9. Boxes of stone ground flour could be sold.
10. There should be regular coverage of the hours when the Mill is open to the public.
11. Power lines should be run to the Mill.
12. An electric range, hot water heater and sinks must be available.

It was decided that a committee to work on the project should be formed by Mr. Morse. Later outgrowth of this committee would result in the appointment of a commission by the City Council. Technical experts are needed on the original committee. The Society will be represented in an advisory capacity, acting as a friendly spur in the undertaking.

A letter from the archaeologist, Mr. Roland Robbins, written following his exploration of the Mill foundation in 1957, was read. The plans referred to in the Robbins letter are in the office of the City Engineer.

The Old Mill, it was pointed out, is the property of the City. Mr. Herbert G. Huntley, former City Treasurer, mentioned the availability of two funds, totalling over $6,000., for the Mill.

Mr. Henkle asked that the City might be advised as to the proposed location of the fence. Then the City will measure to determine the length of the fencing needed.

As a progress report because of public interest it was suggested that the following statement be used: "It is hoped that organizations in the city will unite in the effort to bring the Old Mill back to its unique role in the life of the community."

ANNIVERSARY NOTES

A program of the service of rededication of the Second Congregational Church on the occasion of its 125th anniversary has been received. This service followed the program of the service of dedication of the first meeting house, held on April 23, 1835. The first meeting house was located on the corner of Jay and Huntington Streets.

Also received is an anniversary booklet containing an account of the first century of the Merritt-Chapman-Scott Corporation, leaders in the marine salvage field. Captain Thomas A. Scott won lasting fame as

construction foreman for the building of Race Rock Lighthouse in 1872, working with F. Hopkinson Smith, author, artist and builder.

EARLY WATT METER GIVEN TO SOCIETY

One of the first Thomson recording watt meters made by the General Electric Company's meter department has been given to the Society by Mrs. W. James Hayes of New London.

It is easy to see why this device with its delicate cogwheels interested Mrs. Hayes' father, Joseph C. Young, who was in his early years a clockmaker in the Bristol area. Mr. Young later went to Lynn, Mass., where he taught men of the Thomson Houston Electric Company to assemble these meters, returning week-ends to Jordan Village to be with his family. During his later years Mr. Young operated a monumental works at Jordan Village.

Custodians in Residence:
Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Holmes

Society's telephone is Gibson 3-1209

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